MANGA

REBORN AS A SPACE MERCENARY

I WOKE UP PILOTING THE STRONGEST STARSHIP!

ART:
Shunichi Matsui

STORY:
Ryuto

CHARACTER DESIGN:
Tetsuhiro Nabeshima

FYI, THEIR WEAPONS SYSTEM IS LOCKED ON TO US.

BOOT UP OUR OWN WEAPONS SYSTEM AND SET THE GENERATOR TO BATTLE MODE.

AYE, CAPTAIN.

YEAH, GUESS THEY'RE NOT GONNA BACK OFF SO EASILY.

WE'RE GOOD TO GO.

SWEET, NO NEED TO HOLD BACK.

I'VE SCANNED THE UNIDENTIFIED SHIPS. ALL FOUR ARE BOUNTY TARGETS.

ALL RIGHT.

Chapter 11

REBORN AS A

SPACE MERCENARY

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WE'RE GOIN' IN!!

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Volume 3: Stopover in the Arein System

GA-CHUNK!

bsht!

ksht!

THEY'RE HEADED STRAIGHT FOR US!

TWO OF THEM HAVE REVERSED COURSE!

THE AREIN SYSTEM.

THIS PROSPERING STAR SYSTEM HAS TWO INHABITABLE PLANETS, THREE RESEARCH COLONIES, AND ONE TRADING COLONY.

THERE IS LITTLE IN THE WAY OF NATURAL RESOURCES. HOWEVER, THE HIGH-TECH PRODUCTS DEVELOPED AND MANUFACTURED BY THE RESEARCH COLONIES...

PROVIDE MORE THAN ENOUGH REVENUE TO MAKE UP FOR IT.

THIS SYSTEM IS A HUB OF BOTH PRODUCT EXPORTS AND RAW MATERIAL IMPORTS.

IT'S A MAJOR STOP ON INTERSTELLAR TRADE ROUTES, WITH ENDLESS MERCHANT SHIPS STREAMING THROUGH.

BRAVO!

CLAP

CLAP

WOO!

THERE YOU HAVE IT, AN OVERVIEW OF THE AREIN SYSTEM!

AND...

WE SHOULD HAVE PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES TO CASH IN.

MHM.

LOTSA MERCHANT SHIPS OBVIOUSLY MEANS LOTSA PIRATES HANGING AROUND.

BUT I DOUBT THEY'RE WINNING EVERY FIGHT.

I HEAR THE EMPIRE'S TROOPS KEEP A PRETTY WATCHFUL EYE...

WOOOOSH!

SO, WHICH COLONY ARE WE HEADED FOR? FTL CAN BRING US ANYWHERE.

THEY'RE REALLY NOT ALL THAT INTEREST-ING.

HRRRMM, I KINDA WANTED TO GET A PEEK AT THE RE-SEARCH COLONIES, THOUGH.

THE RESEARCH COLONIES ARE RESTRICTED TO AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY.

I WAS THINKING THE TRADING COLONY WOULD BE A GOOD DESTINATION.

AWW, MAN...

HARDLY ANY RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO BE FOUND.

IT'S JUST A BUNCH OF WORKAHOLICS IN THEIR ELEMENT...

BEEEEP!

GUESS WE'LL SET COURSE FOR THE TRADE--

WELP.

CAPTAIN HIRO!! WE'RE PICKING UP AN SOS SIGNAL!!

TALK ABOUT UNLUCKY...

WE'LL BE IN RANGE IN A MOMENT. DROPPING OUT OF FTL.

WE HAVE TO GO CHECK IT OUT, REMEMBER?

"Duty to render aid!"

QUIT COMPLAINING. IF WE GET A DISTRESS SIGNAL...

ドキ

WOOOOOON

キキン

PICKING UP FIVE SHIPS.

PIRATES CHASING A CIVILIAN PASSENGER SHIP.

ANY RESPONSE TO OUR HAILS?

I SENT A DEMAND THAT THEY WITHDRAW TO NO AVAIL...

!

THEY'VE LOCKED ON TO US.

TYOOM!

THUS, WE ARRIVE AT A SUDDEN, SURPRISE BATTLE...

TSEWN!

BTSEW!

THOOM!

DZZRRRRRT...

ONE DOWN!

KLUNK!

CHK

NEXT!

FIRE!!

BSHT!

KSHT!

WHOOSH!

BA-BOOM!

NO!

NOOOO!

WAIT...

NUMBER THREE, I'M ON MY WAY...

THAT'S TWO!

THEY'RE TRYING TO ESCAPE.

WHAT?!

FWOOOOO

FTL SIGNATURE FROM THE PIRATE SHIPS CONFIRMED!!

VWEEEEE...

HEY!

THOSE BASTARDS! NOT ON MY WATCH!

VWOOOOOOSH!

WE AIN'T FIGHTIN' SOME MONSTER LIKE YOU!

WE'RE OUTTA HERE!

VWEEEEEEEEE!

WHOOMF

I KNOW THEY'RE PIRATES, BUT THAT WAS AN IMPRESSIVE GETAWAY.

BOMF

THAT KIND OF PIRATE IS SUCH A PAIN IN THE ASS...

SIGNALS FROM THE PIRATES LOST!

SHIT! BUNCH OF COWARDS!

BZZRT...

WHATEVER. CALL THE PASSENGER SHIP.

YES, CAPTAIN.

Thank you for the assistance.

This is Inagawa Technologies' *Koueimaru.*

Our engines are offline.

I hate to impose, but could you stand guard until imperial troops arrive?

GLAD YOU'RE SAFE. HOW'S YOUR SHIP LOOKING?

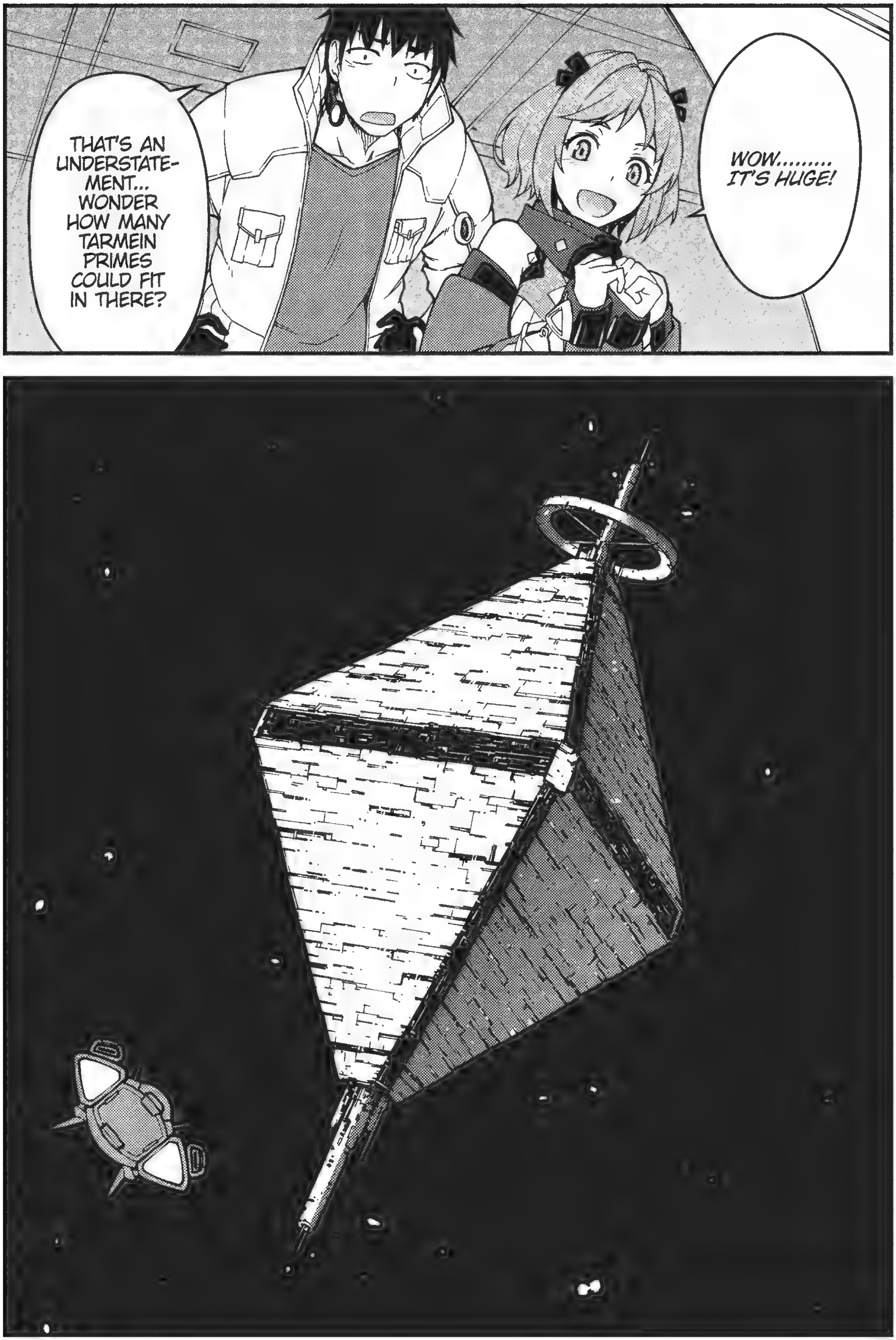
Of course, you'll be paid... You'll need to speak with the head office after I complete delivery...

YOU'RE OFFERING US A JOB?

WHAT'S THE PAY?

Paying you directly is outside of my authority...

OKAY, IT'S A DEAL.


THAT'S AN UNDERSTATE-MENT... WONDER HOW MANY TARMEIN PRIMES COULD FIT IN THERE?
WOW..... IT'S HUGE!

ONE WE'RE DOCKED, WE HAVE TO...

THANKS.

REQUEST TO DOCK SENT.

Hmm...

AND ALSO COLLECT OUR BOUNTY MONEY.

SELL OUR SALVAGE FROM THE PIRATE WRECKS...

GET IN TOUCH WITH INAGAWA TECHNOLOGIES...

Hehe!

SELLING THE SALVAGE!!

PLEASE LET ME TAKE CARE OF...

UMM...

WELL...

THEY'LL PROBABLY CALL US. DON'T THINK WE NEED TO RUSH WITH THAT.

SURE, ALL YOURS.

AS FOR INAGAWA...

THEN LET'S HEAD TO THE IMPERIAL TROOP STATION FOR OUR BOUNTY.

HUH...

COMPARED TO TARMEIN PRIME, THIS PLACE'S WAY MORE URBANIZED.

Hardly surprising.

THIS PLACE REALLY GIVES OFF A DIFFERENT VIBE...

IT'S AROUND NOON, SO IT MAY JUST ALWAYS BE LIKE THIS.

DIDN'T NOTICE ANY STARSIDE WINDOWS FROM THE OUTSIDE EITHER.

IS IT NIGHTTIME RIGHT NOW?

HUH...

THERE IT IS.

THE BOUNTY ON THOSE TWO SHIPS IS FIFTEEN GRAND.

EMBARRASSING AS IT IS, THE ARMY WAS HAVING TROUBLE WITH THEM.

WELL, THAT SQUAD OF FOUR SHIPS HAS BEEN TARGETING PASSENGER VESSELS LATELY.

THAT'S MORE THAN I WOULD'VE EXPECTED...

THANKS TO YOU GUYS, THE OTHER TWO SHIPS SHOULDN'T BE AN ISSUE FOR NOW.

.....

YEAH.

THE ONES WE TOOK OUT CARRIED FAIRLY SHABBY CARGO. PRETTY WEIRD...

MUST'VE STASHED THE GOOD STUFF AWAY SOMEWHERE.

.....

STILL, IF WE GOT ALL FOUR...

SEARCH AN ENTIRE SYSTEM FOR TWO SHIPS? I DON'T THINK SO.

OH, WELL.

LET'S EAT AND THEN GO WANDER AROUND FOR A BIT.

A MEDICAL CENTER?

YES.

I ALREADY LOOKED UP THE MOST HIGHLY RATED.

AH YEAH, ONE REASON WE'RE HERE IS SO I CAN GET A COMPLETE MED SCAN...

Sorry, sorry!

I MEAN... THE WHOLE AMNESIA BIT WAS A LIE, SO I DOUBT I'M IN ANY DANGER...

SO, WHAT'D YOU FIND?

Tsk, tsk!

EXACTLY!

YOU NEED TO PAY MORE ATTENTION TO YOUR HEALTH!!

.....

TAKE A LOOK HERE...

HUH?

ELMA, WANT A CHECKUP TOO?

MIMI PROBABLY SHOULD, BUT I'VE HAD ONE BEFORE...

IF I'M GETTING MY HEAD CHECKED OUT, I MAY AS WELL GET A PHYSICAL TOO.

YOU TWO MIGHT WANNA GET CHECKED OUT AS WELL.

JUST GET IT OVER WITH. CAPTAIN'S GOTTA LOOK AFTER THE CREW'S HEALTH, Y'KNOW.

I'LL PAY FOR IT, OF COURSE.

WELL, IF YOU INSIST...

COME TO THINK OF IT, HOW MUCH *IS* THIS GONNA COST?

WON'T BE CHEAP... COULDN'T BE MORE THAN A MILLION ENER, THOUGH.

A MIL? OKAY, SHOULD BE FINE...

CAPTAIN, I'M NOT SO SURE ABOUT THAT.

YEAH, THERE'S NOTHING *FINE* ABOUT THAT PRICE...

LET'S SEE... A MILLION ENER IS, UH, A HUNDRED MILLION YEN?

UHH...

UH-OH, MY MONEY SENSE IS REALLY GOING DOWN THE DRAIN.

NOTHING TO DO UNTIL THE MEDICAL STUFF IS SORTED.

SIIIIGH... SO BOOORED...

.....

HEEEY.

QUIT BEING SUCH A SLUG.

YOU'RE ONE TO TALK.

RUSTLE

RUSTLE

OH.

GOT SOMEONE INTERESTED IN BUYING THAT PIRATE CARGO.

NICE, HOW MUCH THEY OFFERING?

HERE.

THIS IS NORMAL. YOU'RE JUST ALWAYS ASKING FOR CRAZY PRICES.

I'LL CALCULATE MINE AND MIMI'S SHARE.

HRRMM...

THAT'S PRETTY LOW.

HMM...

Haa...

MOST PEOPLE WOULD BE MORE DEMANDING ABOUT THAT.

POFF

OKAAAY.

NO RUSH ON THE REPAYMENT THING, BY THE WAY.

.....

WELL, THIS WAY YOU CAN STAY WITH ME LONGER.

GAUK!

WHOMP!

COUGH!

WHAT THE HELL?!!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT THAT. I'LL BE STICKING AROUND FOR A WHILE.

WHEEZE

BY THE WAY...

SHFFF

FORGET MY DEBT TO YOU. I STILL NEED A NEW SHIP.

THAT WHOLE AMNESIA STORY...

IS A LIE, ISN'T IT?

THAT WHOLE AMNESIA STORY...

IS A LIE, ISN'T IT?

.....

.....

YOU'RE NOT EVEN TRYING TO HIDE IT.

WH...

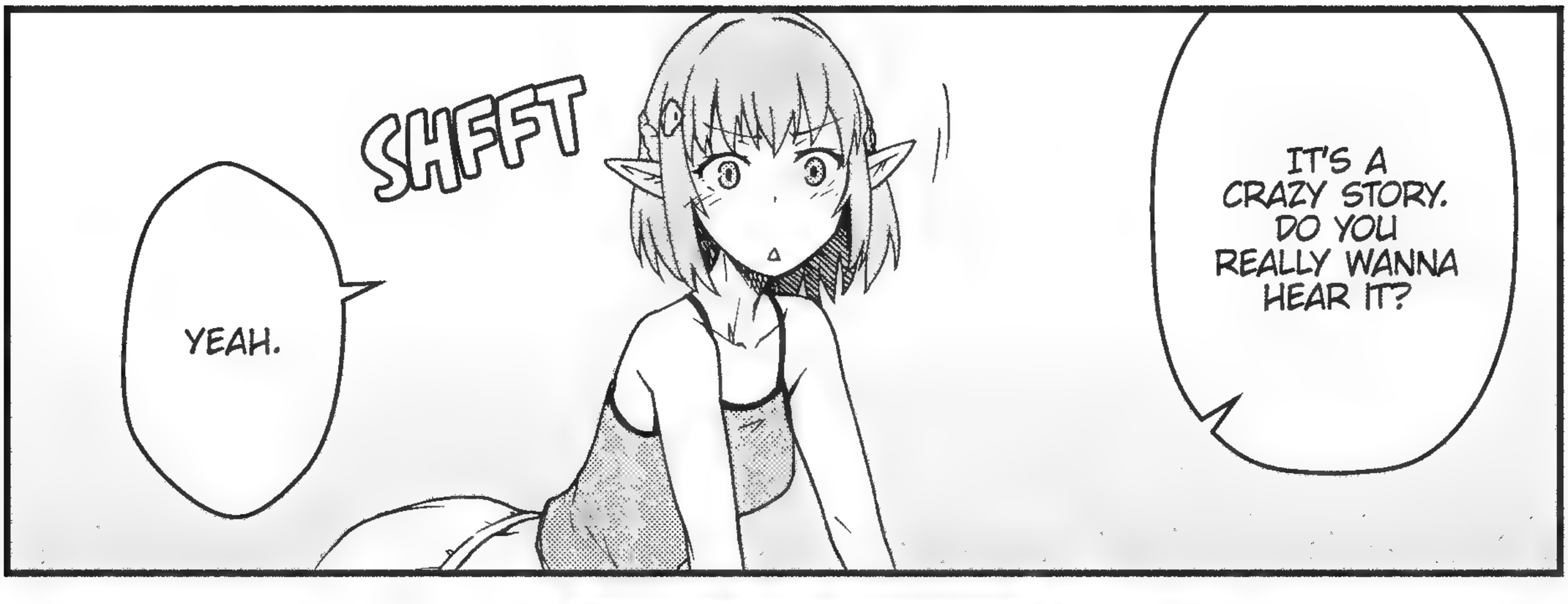
WHAAAAAT...?

AM I GONNA REGRET ASKING?

WHAT?

UHHH... YOU MIGHT QUESTION MY SANITY.

.....


SHFFT
YEAH.
IT'S A CRAZY STORY. DO YOU REALLY WANNA HEAR IT?

HMM, WHERE SHOULD I START...?
OKAY...

ANOTHER UNIVERSE...?

YUP.

MEANING *KRISHNA* AND I CAME FROM AN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE.

THAT *IS* A PRETTY CRAZY STORY...

BUT...

OH, AND I'M SUFFERING FROM A KIND OF AMNESIA...

HEH HEH HEH HEH...

WELL, Y'SEE, I HAD AN ACCIDENT IN HYPERSPACE, AND THAT CORRUPTED ALL MY DATA.

BUT THE GUY AT THE GUILD DID SAY HOW YOU HAD "NO PORT DOCKING RECORDS"...

AND THAT STORY *DOES* TRACK WITH YOUR LACK OF COMMON SENSE AND DIFFERENCE IN VALUES FOR THIS UNIVERSE.

PLUS, I'VE SEEN YOU IN BATTLE!

NO WAY YOU CAN PULL OFF HALF THE STUFF YOU DO WITHOUT PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF THIS UNIVERSE.

IF THAT'S TRUE, THEN HOW WOULD OUR TECH BE COMPATIBLE WITH THE *KRISHNA*?

BACK IN MY UNIVERSE, I WASN'T EVEN A MERCENARY.

UHH, HATE TO CONFUSE YOU ANY FURTHER, BUT...

SOMETHING ISN'T LINING UP...

AN OFFICE WORKER?

AND THAT'S HOW YOU LEARNED ABOUT BEING A MERC?

?

I WAS JUST AN OFFICE WORKER.

THAT MAKES NO SENSE.

FORGET PILOTING A SPACESHIP, I'D NEVER EVEN FIRED A GUN BEFORE.

NO, NOT QUITE.

MY JOB WAS SUPER NORMAL DESK WORK. HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH FIGHTING.

FWSHT

UHHH...

THEN WHERE'D YOUR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS WITH *KRISHNA* COME FROM?

?

?

BUT THAT ALL CAME...

I KNEW ABOUT *KRISHNA*, PIRATES, MERCS, AND OTHER STUFF IN THIS UNIVERSE...

WELL, BEFORE I EVEN CAME HERE...

FROM A COMPUTER GAME BACK IN MY UNIVERSE.

.....

I KNOW, I KNOW.

RIGHT?

SOMEHOW, I ENDED UP IN THE GAME THAT I USED TO PLAY...

AND NOW HERE WE ARE.

BUT THOSE ARE THE FACTS AS FAR AS I'M AWARE.

WAIT A SEC, I NEED TO PROCESS ALL THIS...

WAI...

SO, YOU SEE, SAYING I GOT AMNESIA IN AN ACCIDENT IS WAY EASIER TO UNDERSTAND...

BUT IT'S ALSO CONSISTENT WITH THE WAY YOU WALK AND TALK...

YOUR STORY'S PRETTY MUCH IMPOSSIBLE TO BELIEVE...

FWOOSH

BUT MAYBE MY MEMORIES REALLY ARE OUTTA WHACK.

UNLESS THERE'S SOME WAY OF PEEKING IN MY BRAIN, WE CAN'T CONFIRM ANYTHING.

IN ANY CASE, IT'S WHAT I REMEMBER.

Huh? Really...?

I MEAN, WE CAN CONFIRM THAT...

HMM...

BUT DOES IT REALLY MATTER?

SURE OR NOT, WHAT DO *YOU* WANNA DO?

HUH? YOU SURE?

BUT I'M IN NO RUSH TO GET BACK TO MY UNIVERSE.

WELL, I'M OKAY WITH JUST MOVING ON.

I AM *KINDA* INTERESTED ABOUT HOW THIS ALL HAPPENED...

NOT LIKE THAT STORY CHANGES WHAT I THINK OF YOU, ANYWAY.

ELMA...

THEN THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

I'M DIGGING LIFE HERE, I MUST SAY.

WELL, WORST-CASE SCENARIO...

WEEP

YOU'RE SUCH A GOOD PERSON...

Hngh...

DON'T YOU THINK YOU'RE A BIT OLD TO BE HAVING CRINGY MIDDLE-SCHOOL FANTASIES?

Pfft!

Ohoh?

CRAK

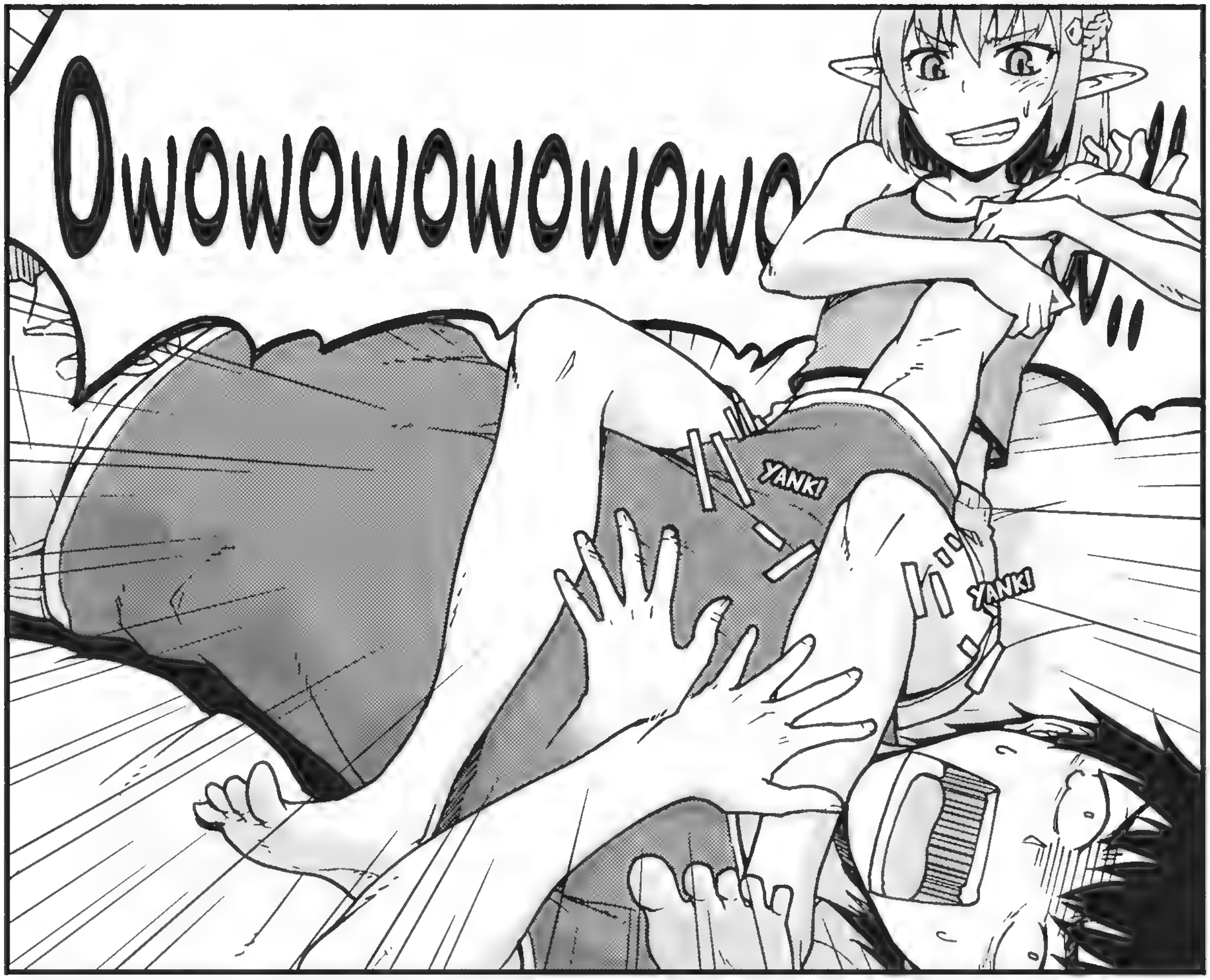
CRIK

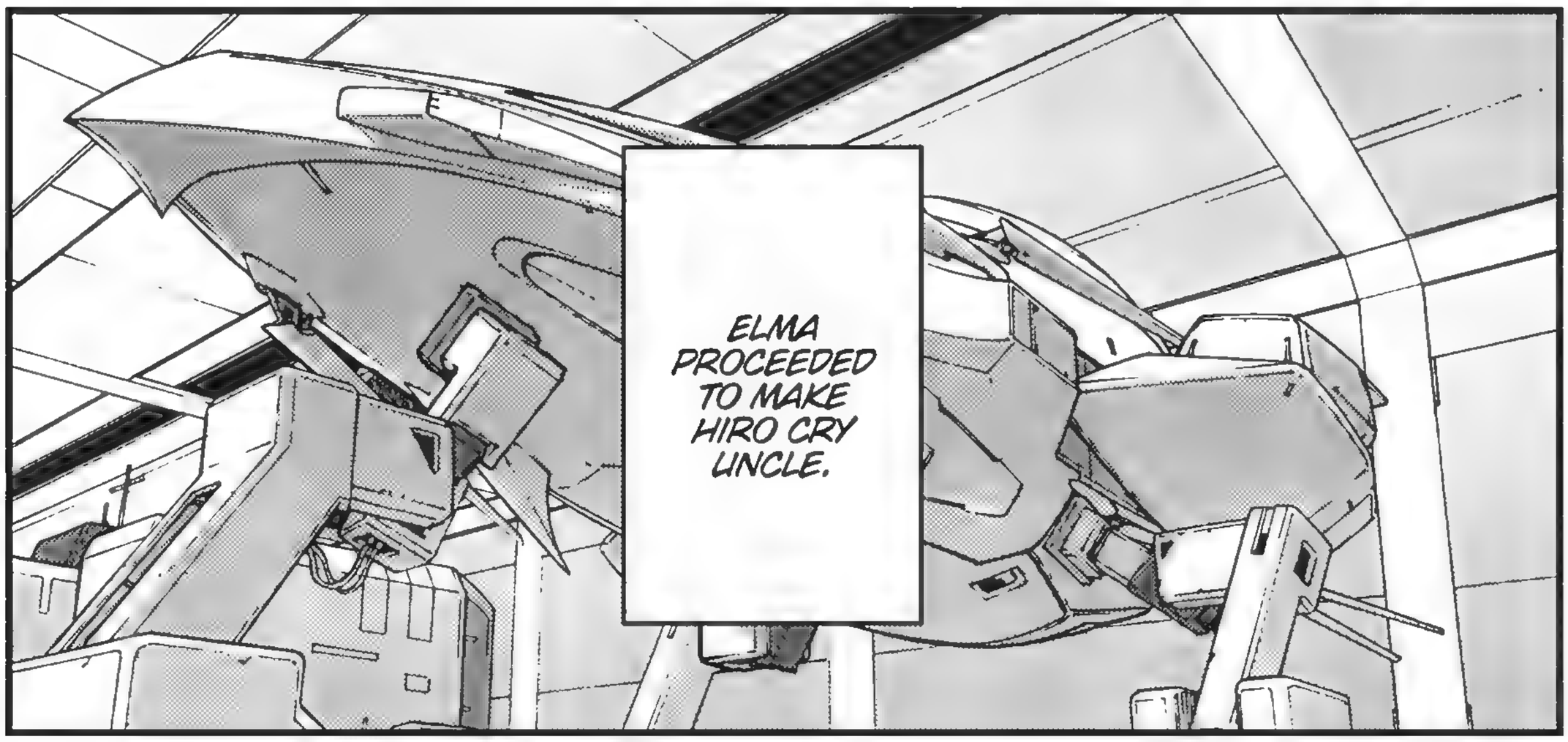
WAZZAT? YOU WANNA FIGHT?

TRY ME!

BIG TALK FOR A POOR LITTLE SPACE ELF...

DKN


OwowowowowowO
YANK!
YANK!


ELMA PROCEEDED TO MAKE HIRO CRY UNCLE.

GLANCE

GLANCE

WITH SPACE ELVES BEING A THING, I EXPECTED OTHER RACES...

BUT I WASN'T EXPECTING THIS MANY...

PEEK

IT'S FUNNY HOW THE UNDER-GROUND PART OF THE COLONY IS ALL BRIGHT!

IS THIS JUST NORMAL...?

SHE DOESN'T SEEM TOO SURPRISED.

THE UNDERGROUND DISTRICT, WHERE THE LIVING SPACES ARE, HAVE PLANETARY-STYLE DAY AND NIGHT.

HUH...

Surface District

Underground District

Outer Wall

Space

HM? OH, YEAH, IT IS.

ABOVEGROUND, THE SURFACE DISTRICT, IS ALWAYS DARK AS NIGHT.

?

BUT I BET YOU'D FIND ANY SHOP YOU NEED DOWN HERE...

JUST THOUGHT WE'D DO A LITTLE SHOPPING WHILE WE'RE NEAR THE GUILD...

※ House (Ship)-Sitter

HWHUH?!

YOU WANT SOMETHING LIKE THAT?

HUH...

LET'S GO!

GRIN...

FWISH

UH-OH.

I-I DON'T REALLY NEED...

Welcome to our store!!

UH ...
THANKS ...

YEAH.

LEAN

IS THIS YOUR FIRST TIME SHOPPING WITH US?

WE WILL DO OUR LITMOST TO ENSURE YOUR SATISFACTION!

HUH? OH, YEAH, SOUNDS GOOD.

Addiction?

WE WILL DO OUR LITMOST TO FURTHER YOUR ADDICTION...

ER, I MEAN...

YOU CATCH ON QUICK. LET'S FIND SOMETHING THAT LOOKS GOOD ON HER.

UNDER-STOOD! SHE IS IN GOOD HANDS.

OUR FOCUS IS YOUR ACQUAINTANCE, CORRECT?

GLINT

NOW THEN, MISS...

Ohnononono

nonono!

OOOH!

THANK YOU FOR WAITING!

CHK

SIR? WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGH--

BLUUUUUSH!

BIP!

FWIP

Received

Sent

SOLD.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PURCHASE.

BIP!

KSHT!

KSHT!

I'M THRILLED THAT YOU APPROVE, SIR!

NOOOO! DOOON'T!

grin...

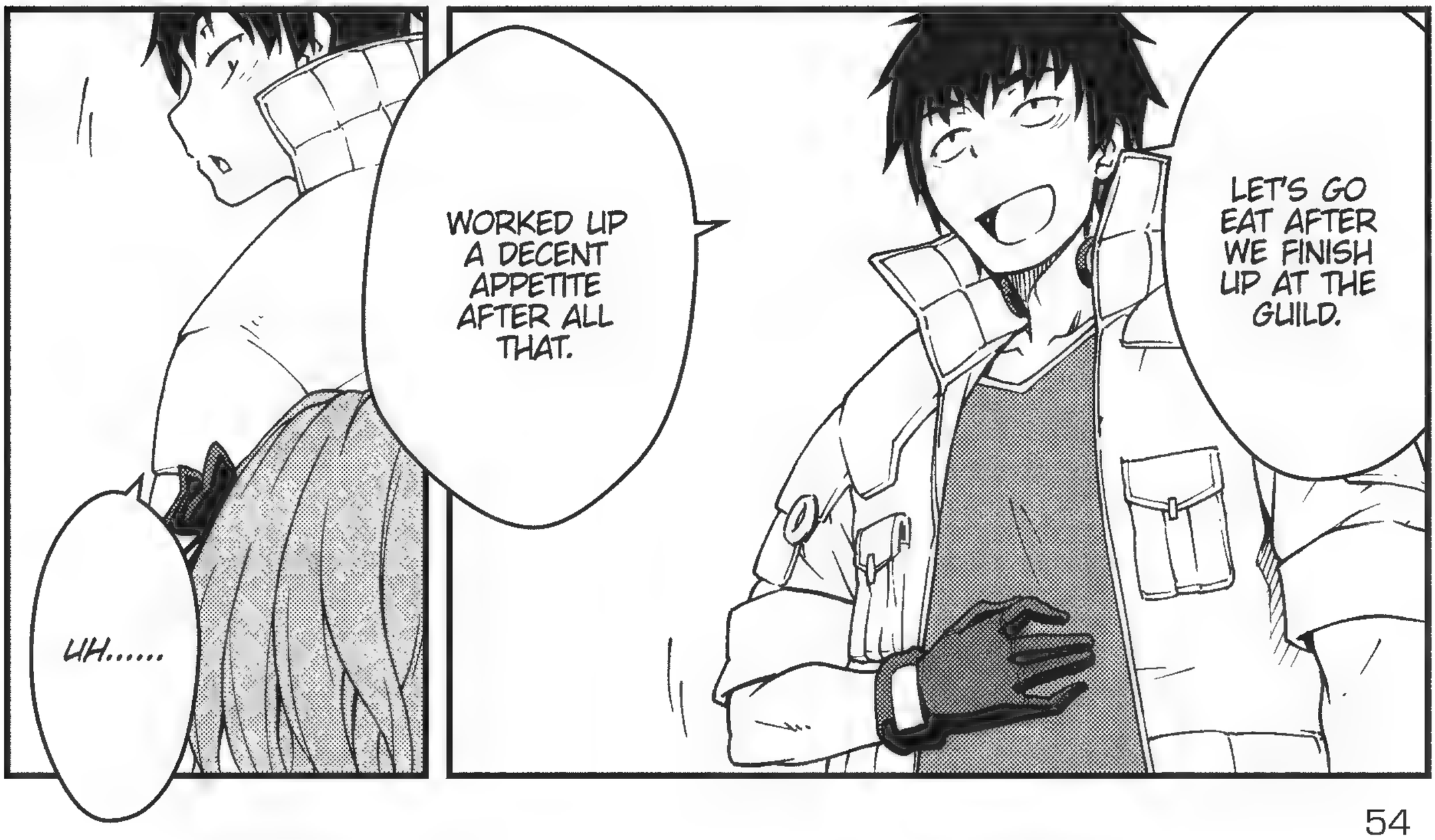
WE HAVE OTHER OUTFITS PREPARED...

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

So precious...

SOLD. ALL OF THEM.

AREIN TERTIUS COLONY MERCENARY GUILD
WE SURE TOOK OUR SWEET TIME~!


LET'S GO EAT AFTER WE FINISH UP AT THE GUILD.
WORKED UP A DECENT APPETITE AFTER ALL THAT.
UH.....

WALKING LIKE THAT MAKES YOU STAND OUT MORE, Y'KNOW?

HNNN...

WELCOME TO THE GUILD.

HONESTLY, YOU SHOULDN'T BE EMBARRASSED...

You look super cute.

MUST I REALLY WEAR THIIIS?

HOW MAY I HELP YOU?

UNDER-STOOD.

AND LET YOU KNOW THAT WE'LL BE WORKING HERE FOR A LITTLE WHILE.

WE JUST GOT HERE FROM TARMEIN PRIME, SO I WANTED TO SAY HI...

BIPBIP!

YOU'RE CAPTAIN HIRO, CORRECT? I NOTED YOUR ARRIVAL.

AND...

IT'S FROM INAGAWA TECHNOLOGIES. WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DO?

AS IT HAPPENS, A MESSAGE JUST ARRIVED FOR YOU.

IT APPEARS TO BE ABOUT YOUR REWARD FOR THE OTHER DAY.

AH, PERFECT TIMING. PLEASE READ IT TO ME.

WHAT'S UP, MIMI?

UMM...

THEIR OFFER IS 500,000 ENER.

DUNNO WHAT THE MARKET'S LIKE AROUND HERE, BUT THAT SOUNDS ABOUT RIGHT... LET 'EM KNOW THAT I ACCEPT.

COULD YOU ASK THEM IF THEY CAN REFER CAPTAIN HIRO FOR A MEDICAL EXAM?

I BELIEVE INAGAWA RUNS A HOSPITAL.

What is it?

GO AHEAD.

THANKS. OH, ONE MORE QUESTION...

SURE, I'LL PASS ON YOUR REQUEST.

WHAT ARE THE LOCAL DELICACIES AROUND HERE?

THE NEXT DAY...

I EXPECTED AS MUCH BASED ON WHAT I HEARD, BUT IT'S A SERIOUS OPERATION...

IT REALLY IS...

IT'S HUGE...

?

HEY, ISN'T THAT THE STUFF YOU GUYS WERE EATING?

Arein's Specialty!

HOW'D YOU LIKE IT? WAS IT TAST--

UHH, WHAT'S WITH THOSE LOOKS?

YEAH, THAT WAS ROUGH.

IMAGINE COAL TAR, BUT WITH UMAMI.

THEY CLAIM IT'S FARM FRESH, BUT THEN SERVE FOOD CARTRIDGE CONTENTS AS IS...

Welcome.

VWIIIIIRR

SORRY TO HEAR THAT.

I am navigation unit N-34.

Ms. Elma and company, please follow me.

!!!

NO, NOT REALLY...

OOOH, THAT'S HIGH TECH.

?

?

YEAH, EXACTLY.

OH, I GUESS IT IS FOR YOU.

.....

ROLL ROLL

TURN

Please follow me.

ROLL ROLL ROLL ROLL

YOU THINK SO? INTERESTING...

IT'S KINDA CUTE.

THAT'S WHAT I'M SAYIN'!

It's pretty cute.

IT'S SO TINY, BUT IT'S TRYING SO HARD!

HEY!

TURN

Here we are.

COME ON IN.

I'VE BEEN EXPECTING YOU.

I'LL BE TAKING CARE OF YOU GUYS.

THE NAME'S SHOUKO.

NICE TO MEET YA.

This is my crew, Mimi and Elma.

I'M CAPTAIN HIRO.

THANK YOU FOR SEEING US TODAY.

NO NEED FOR FORMALITIES.

SO, YOU'RE HERE FOR A MED SCAN, RIGHT?

YEAH. HONESTLY, CAN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I GOT VACCINATED OR HAD A CHECKUP, SO...

WAS NEVER TOO GOOD WITH ALL THAT SERIOUS STUFF. JUST THINK OF ME AS A FRIEND.

Oh... If you say so.

SHE SHOULD GET FULLY CHECKED OUT WHILE WE'RE HERE...

AND MIMI'S ONLY HAD WHATEVER'S AVAILABLE BACK ON TARMEIN.

BUT I MIGHT AS WELL.

HOW ABOUT YOU, ELMA?

GOTCHA. ANYTHING ELSE?

I HAVE REGULAR CHECKUPS.

WHAT?! SERIOUSLY?!

SORRY, MIMI, THAT WAS A LIE.

WELL, CAPTAIN HIRO HAS AMNES--

YEAH, *AMNESIA* DOESN'T SEEM QUITE RIGHT.

SOUNDS INTERESTING. TELL ME MORE?

AND NOW, MY MEMORIES FROM BEFORE THAT MOMENT, AND MY CURRENT REALITY, DON'T LINE UP.

SEEMS LIKE I HAD SOME SORT OF ACCIDENT WHILE IN HYPERDRIVE, AND I ENDED UP IN THE TARMEIN SYSTEM...

IT'S ALMOST AS IF I GOT THROWN INTO ANOTHER UNIVERSE.

HUH...

BUT MY SHIP LACKS DOCKING RECORDS AS WELL.

IF THAT WAS ALL, I'D ACCEPT A DIAGNOSIS OF "NUTS"...

A REALLY SURFACE-LEVEL EXPLANATION, BUT IT'LL DO FOR NOW.

.....

THAT'S A STRANGE EXPERIENCE IF I EVER HEARD ONE.

KSSHT

LET'S GET RIGHT TO IT.

GOT IT.

IT'S DEFINITELY BEST TO CHECK FOR ANY ABNORMALITIES.

WE'LL START WITH A FULL SCAN IN THE MEDICAL PODS.

ピク

TWITCH

THESE ARE MADE BY INAGAWA TECHNOLOGIES, RIGHT?

I'm guessing...

WHOA... THEY'RE HUGE.

I'M SO GLAD YOU ASKED!

?

GRAB!

AND THAT'S NOT ALL!

.....

TA-DA!

AFTER ALL, EVERY POD IS EQUIPPED WITH ITS OWN POSITRONIC COMPUTER FOR DATA ANALYSIS!

THEY'RE A BIT BIG AND PRETTY EXPENSIVE, BUT BOY, CAN THEY EVER PERFORM!

AREN'T THEY AWESOME?!!

Ha

Ha

Ha!

AND THAT ABOUT COVERS IT.

YEAH, IF NOTHING ELSE, THEY'RE AWESOME.

TH-THEY'RE AWESOME!

I GOT *MAYBE* TWENTY PERCENT OF THAT...

Ha

Ha!

COURSE, I GOTTA GIVE YOU THE BEST OF THE BEST.

SHE... SHOULD DEFINITELY BE DOING RESEARCH, NOT TALKING TO PATIENTS...

YUP, THAT'S ABOUT RIGHT. LONG AS YOU GOT THAT MUCH.

?

YOU SAVED MY LIFE, AFTER ALL.

OHHHH!!

YES, OF COURSE!

REMEMBER THAT SHIP YOU SAVED?

WAIT, YOU MEAN...?

LEMME TELL YOU, I THOUGHT I WAS DONE FOR!

YOU WERE ABOARD?

BIP

BIP

I'M HONESTLY MORE OF AN R&D PERSON...

SO I PULLED SOME STRINGS TO TAKE ON YOUR CASES.

ALL RIGHTY, STRIP AND HOP IN THE POD!

UHH, OKAY...?

HUH?

BUT DON'T WORRY.

I'M CONFIDENT I KNOW MORE ABOUT THIS STUFF THAN MY COLLEAGUES.

ALL THE WAY.

THAT'S WHAT I SAID.

I GOTTA STRIP?

ALL THE WAY.

I DO MIND, THOUGH...

peek

zzzip——

I DON'T MIND, REALLY.

I'VE SEEN IT ALL BEFORE.

FWAP!

OOMF!

YOU WAIT UNTIL WE'RE IN OUR PODS!

AYE AYE, MA'AM.

MIMI! GET IN THE POD, NOW!

DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT PEEKING!!

DUN!

PHEW...

OKAY, ALL DONE!

I REALLY HOPE NOTHING'S WRONG...

I'M KIND OF WORRIED ABOUT YOURS.

OUR RESULTS ASIDE...

shff

NOW, NOW, NO NEED TO WOR--

Ahaha!

DON'T SAY THAT. YOU'RE GONNA MAKE ME WORRIED.

OKAY, NOW I ACTUALLY AM WORRIED...

NO... HUH? WHAAAT?

HMM.

WELL, TO START...

SURE, WHAT IS IT?

HIRO, COUPLE OF QUESTIONS FOR YOU.

What?!

WHY DON'T YOU HAVE A MULTILINGUAL TRANSLATION IMPLANT?

Whaaat?

IT DOES SEEM WEIRD.

DEFINITELY WEIRD.

YUP, IT'S WEIRD.

IS THAT... UNUSUAL?

Must be, given those looks...

UHH...

ALMOST EVERY SAPIENT IN THE GALAXY HAS ONE INSERTED INTO THE BRAIN SHORTLY AFTER BIRTH.

THE MULTI-LINGUAL TRANS-LATION IMPLANT...

IS A DEVICE THAT ALLOWS COMMUNI-CATION IN VARIOUS LANGUAGES.

REALLY? CAN WE DO A SHORT LITTLE TEST?

YEAH, AT LEAST NOT THAT I'VE SEEN.

BUT I DON'T THINK YOU'VE HAD ANY TROUBLE SPEAKING SO FAR.

HRRMM...

I DON'T UNDER-STAND.

HOW'S THAT POSSIBLE?

YOU CAN SPEAK JUST FINE WITHOUT ONE...

DOESN'T SEEM TO BE AN ISSUE.

IS IT JUST 'CUZ I'M FROM ANOTHER UNIVERSE?

NO, HONESTLY, I HAVE NO IDEA.

FINE... OKAY, NEXT QUESTION: WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

THE THIRD PLANET IN THE SOLAR SYSTEM, EARTH. *UHH*, AS IN, THE STAR SYSTEM WITH THE SUN.

WHAAAT?

WELL, IF IT'S NOT AN ISSUE, I'M FINE WITH THAT.

AND I DON'T WANNA BE YOUR GUINEA PIG.

BUT I WANNA KNOW *MOOORE!*

Huh?

LESS YOUR BODY, MORE YOUR GENETIC CODE.

IT'S FULL OF PATTERNS UNLIKE ANYTHING I'VE SEEN BEFORE.

NEVER HEARD OF IT.

SO, WHAT'S THAT GOT TO DO WITH MY BODY?

BUT...

Phew!

So don't worry.

YOUR BODY IS THE SAME AS ANY OTHER HUMAN. NO ISSUES.

SOOO...?

THAT'S WHY THIS IS SO INTEREST-ING.

YOU MIGHT HAVE UNIQUE GENES WE'VE YET TO DISCOVER...

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

WHAAAT?

CAN I HAVE A SAMPLE?

YOUR MYSTERIOUS DNA IS AS MUCH A NEW FRONTIER AS THE EDGE OF SPACE!

FWSH!

I'M OFFERING TO BUY IT!

YOU COULD EARN A SMALL FORTUNE!

.....

WORST-CASE SCENARIO? YOUR GENETIC CODE GETS LEAKED. BUT WE'VE GOT OUR SAMPLES LOCKED DOWN, SO DON'T WORRY!

WHAT'RE THE CONS?

IN THE MEANTIME, I'LL CONTINUE THE GIRLS' EXAMS IN ANOTHER ROOM.

OKAY, THEN... I'LL THINK IT OVER.

ALL RIGHT. MUCH APPRE-CIATED!

GLANCE

I'LL PASS THAT ON TO THE HIGHER-UPS. WE CAN HAVE THE MONEY AND CONTRACT READY SOON.

SO, IF YOU COULD WAIT UNTIL THEN...

~♪

.....

slllllp...

WELL, YEAH...

?

IS MY "MYSTERIOUS" DNA REALLY ALL THAT VALUABLE?

IT MIGHT EVEN GIVE HUMANITY A BOOST TO THE NEXT EVOLUTIONARY STEP...

LIKE I SAID, "NEW" HUMAN DNA IS BASICALLY A NEW FRONTIER.

SO, IT'S ALREADY IN THE BAG, AND SHOULDN'T TAKE MUCH LONG--OH!

beep!

PAYMENT IS BASED ON THE RARITY OF YOUR DNA AND ITS POTENTIAL USE IN FUTURE PRODUCTS, AMONG OTHER THINGS.

THE NEXT EVOLU-TIONARY STEP...?

THAT'S THE KIND OF POSSIBILITY LURKING WITHIN YOU.

0

So three hundred million yen...

THREE MILLION ENER.

THAT'S QUITE THE SUM.

WHAT'S THE OFFER?

SPEAK OF THE DEVIL, AND HE SHALL APPEAR.

OKAY, LET'S GET YOUR BLOOD AND SEMEN COLLECTED.

WAIT, WHAT? MY SEMEN?

TAKE GOOD CARE OF MY INFO, YEAH...?

FWIP

OF COURSE.

GREAT, THANKS! THAT'S IT FOR THE PAPERWORK.

MY COLLECTION METHODS...

CAN BE ENJOYABLE.

CHK

CHK

N-NO WAY...

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GO THAT FAR...

SH

LIP

HUH?

WH-WHAT'RE THOSE FOR...?

snap!

NOOOOOOOOO!!!

DON'T WORRY.

SOME PEOPLE GET QUITE ADDICTED TO THE SENSATION, Y'KNOW?

Whuh?

No...

.....

NOTHING... LEAVE ME ALONE...

THE HECK HAPPENED TO YOU?

Oooh!

HUH. THAT DIDN'T HURT A BIT.

OKAY, YOUR VACCI-NATIONS ARE GOOD TO GO.

PSSHT

Oops.

UH, NEVER MIND...

NO? WHY WOULD IT?

HNN...

THERE'S SO MUCH I WISH TO KNOW...

I'M SUDDENLY *MUCH* MORE INTERESTED IN YOUR ORIGINS.

PLEASE, JUST STOP. THAT'S A SENSITIVE SPOT FOR ME.

AWW, YOU'RE NO FUN.

HOW ABOUT YOU START BY ANALYZING MY DNA FIRST?

WANNA GET SOMETHING TO EAT WHILE WE WAIT FOR YOUR RESULTS?

SURE! WHAT DO YOU HAVE HERE?

YUP.

SO, THAT'S IT FOR THE EXAMINATION?

I'D RECOMMEND EATING RIGHT OUT OF THE FOOD CARTRIDGES FROM...

HMM, LET'S SEE...

NO THANKS.

YOU THREE ARE THE PICTURE OF HEALTH.

JUST WATCH OUT FOR ANY POTENTIAL SIDE EFFECTS AND TAKE IT EASY FOR ABOUT THREE DAYS.

AND WE'VE ADMINISTERED THE NECESSARY JABS.

nod

nod

OH, LADIES, C'MERE FOR A SEC.

Hiro, you stay there.

KSSHH!

OKAY.

Y-YEAH, GOT IT...

NOW YOU KNOW. JUST TAKE CARE.

OKAY, THAT WRAPS UP YOUR MED EXAMS.

?

EXAMS FOR THE THREE OF US COST 90,000 ENER.

MEDICAL FEES IN THIS UNIVERSE AREN'T CHEAP... GOOD TO KNOW.

I'LL SEND THE FILES TO YOUR SHIP.

.....

.....

SO?

YOU BARGED IN HERE BUT WON'T SAY ANYTHING. WHAT'S UP?

WHOOSH!

WAAAAAAAHHHH!!

WHOA!

HNN...

HUH?

HEY!

WHUMP

GAAAAHHH!!

Y-YOU 'N I...C-CAN MAKE B-BA...

"BA"? WHAT'S THAT S'POSED MEAN?

WHAT THE HELL?!

GUH, YOU STINK!

HOW MUCH DID YOU DRINK?

=

=

FWUMP

WHAT NOW?!

AAAAND, SHE'S OUT...

snoooore...

YOU'RE FERTILE NOW?

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?

UMM, WELL, YOU SEE...

ONCE FEMALE ELVES COME OF AGE...

EVEN IF THEY... *DO THE DEED,* THEY DON'T BECOME PREGNANT.

ゴゴゴゴゴゴ WOOOOOOSH

ONLY ONCE THEY'VE ACCEPTED THEIR PARTNER AS A SOULMATE CAN THEY PHYSICALLY BEAR CHILDREN.

HUH...

SO, BASI-CALLY...

WHOOSH

ELMA'S HEAD OVER HEELS IN LO--

STILL...

OOOO-WWW...

GRR!

JUST SHUT UP!! YOU IDIOT!!

E-ELMA, PLEASE!

SO, HOW'S THAT POSSIBLE? CAN ELVES HAVE KIDS WITH ANY SPECIES?

BE IT ORC, GOBLIN, OR TENTACLE MONSTER...

?

HOW'S IT EVEN WORK?

WE MIGHT LOOK SIMILAR, BUT HUMANS AND ELVES ARE STILL DIFFERENT SPECIES!

SPACE ELVES ARE AWESOME!

I DON'T EVEN WANNA KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THAT THICK SKULL OF YOURS...

?

GUESS IT'S AN EVOLUTION-ARY ADAP-TATION.

HMM...

WE WERE TOLD TO TAKE IT EASY, BUT A LITTLE WALK WON'T HURT.

SO, THIS IS THE START OF OUR TOUR?

WITH NOTHING TO DO, MIMI SUGGESTED SIGHT-SEEING...

YES, AREIN IS AN INDUSTRIAL POWERHOUSE WITH MANY FACTORIES!

THIS ONE GROWS CULTIVATED MEAT!

LET'S HEAD IN, SHALL... WE?

UM, ELMA?

CI...

TOURING FACTORIES... SHOULD BE A GOOD OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS UNIVERSE.

TOURING THE FACTORIES IS SUPPOSEDLY QUITE A POPULAR ACTIVITY.

CIERRA CORPORATION

THE CIERRA CORPORATION...

A CULTURED MEAT FACTORY...

?

?

JOLT!

HEY, WHAT'S UP?

YOU TWO HAVE FUN!

UHH, I JUST REMEMBERED I HAVE AN ERRAND TO RUN...

fwip

HOLD IT RIGHT THERE.

?

ISN'T THE MEAT WE USUALLY EAT ARTIFICIAL?

OH, IT'S CULTURED MEAT? NOT ARTIFICIAL MEAT?

WHY'RE YOU RUNNING AFTER SEEING THE FACTORY SIGN?

ONE WAY TO FIND OUT!

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

ARTIFICIAL MEAT IS SYNTHESIZED. BUT CULTURED MEAT...?

Never heard of this stuff...

CHF

ALL RIGHT.

I-I'M GONNA SIT THIS ONE OUT...

GOOD POINT.

Noooooooooooo!!

LET'S HEAD IN.

zhfffffzhffffff...

Thank you for selecting our narrated tour service.

Welcome to the Cierra Corporation Cultured Meat Production Facility.

VWOOM

VWOOM

VWOOM

VWOOM

SEEMS LIKE AN EXCESSIVELY THICK DOOR...

THIS IS OUR PATH!

CAPTAIN!

WHAT'S THIS SUPPOSED TO BE?

I DON'T SEE ANYTHING EXCEPT FOR A SINGLE ENTRANCE...

DON'T COME CRYING TO ME IF YOU END UP REGRETTING THIS...

fssht—

GA-THUNK!

Thank you for embarking on our narrated tour.

During the tour, this observation room will move throughout our processing facility...

allowing you to enjoy the sights without leaving the room.

SEEMS LIKE IT...

Some kinda gondola-type thing...?

THE ROOM ITSELF IS A VEHICLE!

To begin, let us observe the early stages of the cultivation process.

OH, SOMETHING'S COMING UP!

The intermediate stages of the process are occurring before your eyes.
I WONDER WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE...
NO IDEA.
WRITHE
WRITHE

NOW YOU KNOW WHY I TRIED TO RUN.

And this is the final stage in cultivation prior to processing and shipment.

I GOT A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS...

WAIT, SO THIS "CULTIVATION" STUFF...

LOOOOOOOOM...

NIKKCH

GIKKKSH

EEEEEEEK!!

...

Thank you very much for visiting our facility.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY SHOWED US THE BUTCHERING OF THOSE MONSTERS...

I TRIED TO WARN YOU...

Urp!

Nngh...

I-I DON'T THINK I'LL BE EATING MEAT FOR A WHILE...

MICA Corporation.

L-LET'S FORGET ALL ABOUT THIS AND MOVE ON!

You two gonna be okay?

YEAH!

CLENCH

OOOOH, IT'S SO BRIGHT!

HUH, SO FOOD CARTRIDGES USE VEGETABLES TOO?

UHH, WHAT'S THIS MICA CORPORATION DO AGAIN?

THIS IS THEIR AQUA-CULTURE FARM.

?

I WONDER WHAT THESE ARE.

GREEN POOLS?

WHAT'S THAT FINE, BROWN POWDER?

They seem to be scattering it over the pools.

UHH...

It's explained on this panel.

ALGAE, APPARENTLY.

IT'S THE MAIN INGREDIENT IN FOOD CARTRIDGES.

IT'S MANURE MADE UP OF WASTE COLLECTED FROM SHIPS.

WASTE FROM SHIPS...?

OH, *EWW!*

?

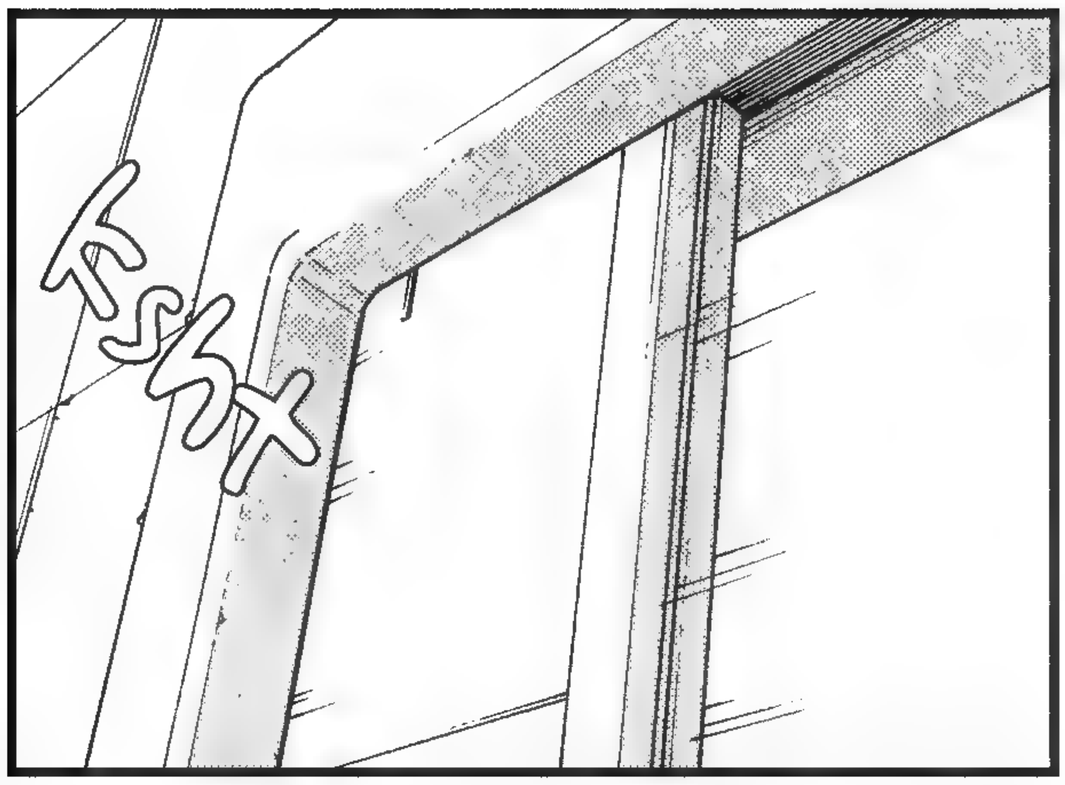
SO THAT'S WHY THEY COLLECTED IT FROM *KRISHNA.*

RECYCLING, EH?

REALLY? BACK WHERE I'M FROM, IT WAS PRETTY NORMAL.

IT STILL FEELS REALLY WEIRD...

I GET IT IN THEORY, BUT...


ぐぐぐ

I'D EXPECT NOTHING LESS FROM A PRIMITIVE PLANET.
BEING CALLED PRIMITIVE MAKES ME FEEL WEIRD, SO CUT IT OUT.

OOOH.

VWEEEEEEN

NOW, *THIS* IS MORE LIKE THE FACTORY LINES I WAS EXPECTING.

GUUUUSH

THIS MUST BE WHERE THE CARTRIDGES COME TO-GETHER.

401

GLRRRRRRRCH

IS THAT WHAT I THINK IT IS?

IT IS...

OH.

?

THE LOCAL SPECIALTY...

OHHH...

WHAT IS IT?

GLOW

HURRY!! HURRYYYY!!

LET'S GO!! COME ON!!

DON'T JUST STAND THERE! WE GOTTA GET GOING! LET'S HIT THE TASTING AREA!

YES, THEY'RE THE FOREMOST ALCOHOL PRODUCER IN THE EMPIRE.

NEXT UP WAS KORYU BEVERAGES, RIGHT?

THIS IS THE LAST STOP ON OUR TOUR, SO CHILL OUT.

HNNN...

C'MON, THERE'S FRESHLY MADE STUFF!!

WHOA, WAIT A SEC. I WANNA CHECK EVERYTHING OUT FIRST.

LOOKS LIKE WINE FRUIT!!

FIGURED THEY'D JUST DO THE PRESSING, FERMENTATION, ALL THE MANU-FACTURING STUFF.

I'M SURPRISED THEY GROW THE FRUITS THEM-SELVES.

AN OR-CHARD, HUH?

AMPLE

LOOK, SAMPLES! MIGHT AS WELL, RIGHT?!!

WINE FRUIT...?

ARE THOSE THE GRAPES FROM EARLIER?

BEEP!

I DON'T THINK I'VE EVER TRIED WINE BEFORE.

How exciting!

TUMP

OM!

.....

I CAN DEFINITELY SMELL THE ALCOHOL.

Mmmmm!!

WINE STRAIGHT FROM THE FRUIT IS AWESOME!!

I THINK I'D END UP DRUNK IF I HAD TOO MANY, THOUGH.

.....

Here, say "Aaahh"!

WANT ONE, HIRO? I KNOW YOU DON'T DRINK, BUT JUST TRY ONE!

!!!

?!

munch

munch

Aaaah...

THE FRUIT ITSELF IS FULL OF WINE?!

How's that possible?!

FWSH!

WINE?!

?

COME TO THINK OF IT, I THINK THEY USED SOMETHING LIKE THAT IN THE OLD DAYS.

I've only heard stories about it...

WHAT ABOUT THE FER-MENTATION PROCESS?

FERMEN-TATION?

NEXT UP ARE THE SPIRIT TREES!!

THE GENETIC ENGINEERING IN THIS UNIVERSE IS INSANE...

FIRST, THE CULTURED MEAT, NOW WINE FRUITS...

...
EHEHEHEE... HIROOO...
C-CAP'N HIRO, I'M SHORRY...

GUESS THAT'S A WRAP FOR TODAY...

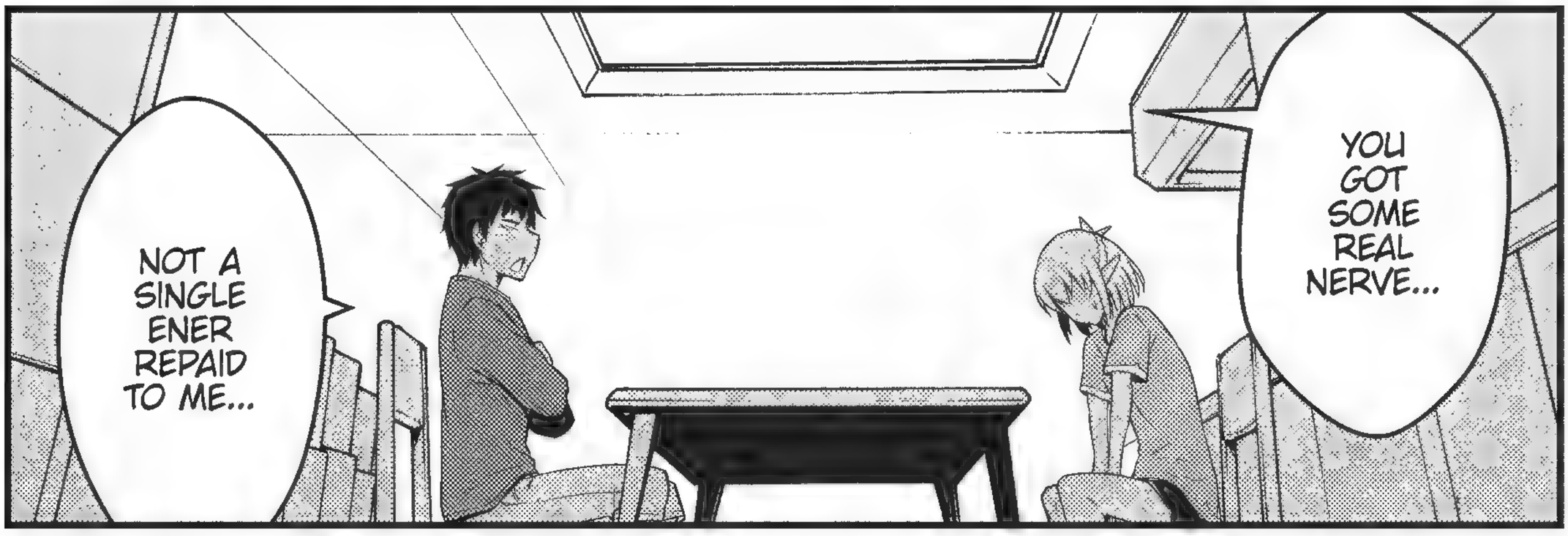
Haa...

.....

Hic!

The Next Day

.....


NOT A SINGLE ENER REPAID TO ME...
YOU GOT SOME REAL NERVE...

A HUNDRED GRAND WORTH, NO LESS!
peek...
WELL, Y'SEE...
YET HERE YOU ARE, BUYING A MOUNTAIN OF FANCY BOOZE.
10
Alcohol

Ahahahaha.

NO.

NO BOOZE FOR ONE WEEK.

FORGIVE ME.

BOW

AND IF I CATCH YOU SNEAKING A DRINK...

CLATTER

WHAAAT?!

Lots and lots of really sticky...

EEEK!

OF WHAT SHOUKO DID TO ME...

I'M GONNA GIVE YOU A TASTE...

wiggle

wiggle-

.....

UNDER-STOOD, CAPTAIN...

HMHM, WHERE TO GO...

STAYING IN THE SHIP WHILE "TAKING IT EASY" IS BORING, SO...

I DECIDED TO WANDER THE DOWN-TOWN AREA.

ELMA'S SULKING IN BED OVER HER BOOZE BAN.

ELMA AND MIMI DIDN'T JOIN ME THIS TIME.

AND MIMI'S STUDYING HER OPERATOR MANUALS.

Okay...

I see...

ALL RIGHTY...

IT'S NICE TO HAVE A LITTLE ME-TIME EVERY NOW AND THEN.

NEW

ARE THERE NO GAME SHOPS AROUND HERE?

I'LL DO PRETTY MUCH ANYTHING IF IT KILLS TIME, BUT...

RESULTING IN PLENTY OF DULL DAYS LIKE TODAY.

SUR-PRISINGLY, THE SHIP HAS LITTLE IN THE WAY OF ENTER-TAINMENT.

STOP!!

The closest thing to a game shop near here is...

DUNNO WHY MY TERMINAL DOESN'T HAVE ANY GAMES ON IT...

peek...

DÉJÀ VU...

Haa...

EVER SINCE I CAME TO THIS UNIVERSE...

I HAVEN'T HAD ANY ISSUES FINDING TROUBLE.

CHAK!

WHOOSH!

?!

FWSH!

WHUMP!

EEK!!

NOT ANOTHER STEP!

FWIP!

vweem!

FREEZE!

……

zhkk

THIS GUY...

IS NO AMATEUR.

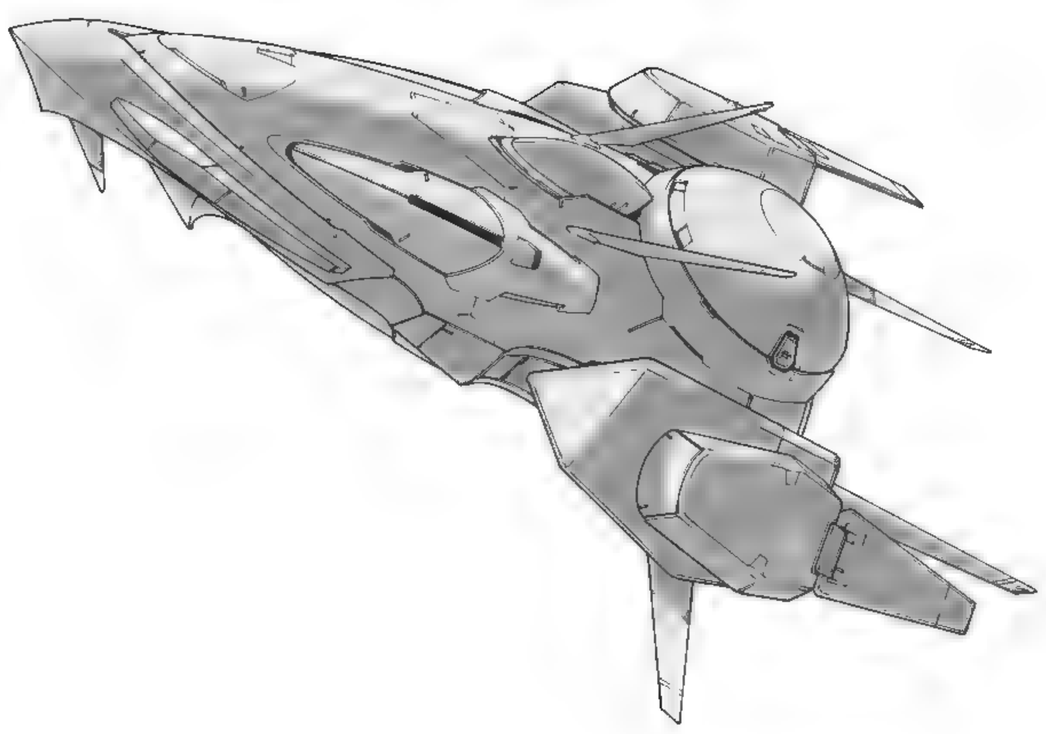
MM...

HOOO-OWDY!

WH-
WHAT...?
FANCY MEETING YOU HERE.

REBORN AS A SPACE MERCENARY

I WOKE UP PILOTING THE **STRONGEST STARSHIP!**



ALL RIGHT.

NO FUNNY BUSINESS, YEAH?

FWSH

DO ME A FAVOR: TURN AROUND AND HEAD ON HOME.

.....

=

THAT'S NOT A LOOK OF SURREN--

DZZRRR...

Chapter 15

GA-CHUNK!

VWSH!

THOOM!

THOOM!

BWEEEEEM...

SKZRT!

SKZRT!

Hrngh!

BAM!!

BOOM!

THWUMP!

IS...

EITHER WAY WE PROBABLY SHOULDN'T LEAVE HIM LIKE THIS.

bzrt

bzrt

IS HE DEAD?

WHO KNOWS?

Maybe he's just unconscious?

glance

GEEZ...

GOTTA SAY, I'M IMPRESSED BY YOUR ABILITY TO FIND TROUBLE.

EXCUSES, EXCUSES.

WAIT A SEC, IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK!

YOU'RE A MAGNET FOR CONFLICT.

Doctor Shouko...

STEP

HOLD ON A SECOND.

IT'S HONESTLY NOT HIS FAULT.

I'M TRULY SORRY.

WAIT...

IT'S MY FAULT HE GOT INVOLVED.

WHAAAT ?!

ACTUALLY, MAYBE IT IS HIS FAULT!

I WAS ON MY WAY FROM THE HOSPITAL TO MY LAB WHEN THESE GUYS JUMPED ME.

WHY WERE YOU BEING CHASED IN THE FIRST PLACE?

UMM...

I JUST MANAGED TO MAKE A RUN FOR IT...

THEY STOLE THE BRIEFCASE I WAS CARRYING AND TRIED TO KIDNAP ME...

REALLY?

SQUISH

AND THAT'S WHEN HIRO SAVED ME.

.....

.....

JUST SO YA KNOW, THAT'S KINDA HIS THING.

THAT'S HOW WE ENDED UP WITH HIM...

REALLY?

UHH...

I THINK THEY MIGHT'VE TRIED TO GRAB ME AS AN AFTER-THOUGHT.

Only one of them chased after me, so...

DID THEY WANT YOU OR...?

SO, ANY IDEA WHAT THEY WERE AFTER?

WHICH WERE?

THEIR MAIN GOAL WAS PROBABLY THE CONTENTS OF MY BRIEFCASE.

.....

THE FINAL DATA ON YOUR GENETIC CODE, HIRO.

THE COLONY OFFICIALS AND A SPECIAL DEPARTMENT FROM INAGAWA ARE SEARCHING. IT SHOULDN'T BE LONG BEFORE IT'S FOUND.

UHH, IS MY CODE GONNA BE OKAY?

IT'S A SPECIAL BRIEFCASE, SO THEY'RE NOT GONNA OPEN IT EASILY. AND IT'S GOT A TRANSPONDER ON IT.

WHAT?

THAT'S WHY I SAID IT MIGHT ACTUALLY BE YOUR FAULT.

I THINK THAT'S QUITE A REACH, DOCTOR...

OH-HO! I SENSE ULTERIOR MOTIVES BEHIND THAT OFFER.

WHERE ARE YOU HEADED NEXT? SHOULD I ESCORT YOU?

I MEAN, IF YOU SAY SO...

DOCTOR!

IT'S OKAY, MY ESCORT WILL BE HERE SOON...

AND HERE THEY ARE.

IF YOU HAD SIMPLY CONTACTED THE SECURITY DEPARTMENT IN THE FIRST PLACE, WE WOULD HAVE ESCORTED YOU...

YEAH, YEAH, MY BAD.

THE HIGHER-UPS ARE *NOT* HAPPY RIGHT NOW.

OKAY, OKAY! NEXT TIME, I PROMISE.

DOCTOR, PLEASE...

BESIDES, I DIDN'T THINK ANYONE ELSE KNEW ABOUT THE BRIEF-CASE...

LOOK, GETTING AN ESCORT FROM YOUR GUYS IS A PAIN IN THE BUTT.

Haa...

THANKS AGAIN FOR THE RESCUE.

SEE YOU LATER, HIRO.

FWIP

SHWUP

OKAY... GUESS WE'LL HEAD OUT, TOO.

WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE GOING, MISTER?

WITH YOUR *UNIQUE* TALENT, WE CAN'T JUST LET YOU WALK AROUND BY YOURSELF IN SUCH A SAFE COLONY.

YES! WHO KNOWS WHAT KIND OF TROUBLE WILL FIND YOU NEXT?

We'll accom— pany you!

.....

HAAH... I'M INNOCENT, REALLY.

.....

.....

.....

YOUR AUTOMATIC COOKER IS QUITE IMPRESSIVE.

YEAH, THANKS.

YOU MADE QUITE THE TREK ALL THE WAY OUT HERE...

TO WHAT DO WE OWE THE HONOR?

WHY I'M HERE...

TO RECRUIT YOU, OF COURSE.

I'VE ALREADY TURNED DOWN THAT OFFER NUMEROUS TIMES...

.....

I WOULDN'T WANT TO ATTRACT THE ATTENTION OF THE MERCENARY GUILD BY COERCING YOU, SO I'VE GIVEN UP ON THAT.

...

THEN WHY THE HECK ARE YOU HERE?

I HAVE NO INTENTION WHATSOEVER OF JOINING THE IMPERIAL ARMY.

YES, I'M WELL AWARE. SUCH A PITY.

Uh-huh...

I SEE. CONGRATULATIONS.

I'm now a lieutenant commander.

FOLLOWING THE BATTLE OF TARMEIN, MY ACTIONS WERE REWARDED...

WITH A PROMOTION.

I DO WONDER...

WHY THE CRYSTAL LIFE-FORMS CHOSE TO BLESS US BY ATTACKING THE ENEMY SHIPS.

OF COURSE, IT WOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED WITHOUT YOUR SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE BATTLE.

IT WAS A HAPPY ACCIDENT...

THAT I HAPPENED TO BE NEARBY. I SURE WAS SWEATING, THOUGH!

HA HA HA!

YES, THAT WAS QUITE THE STROKE OF LUCK.

WELL, WE WON'T INVESTIGATE ANY FURTHER.

Don't worry about it.

Ohnono

no...

INDEED, IMPRESSIVE TIMING.

IS SHE SERIOUSLY TRYING TO SAY I OWE HER ONE OVER THIS SINGING CRYSTAL STUFF?

NOT LIKE I ALREADY SAVED HER ARMY WHEN SHE NEEDED IT MOST OR ANYTHING...

.....

HAHAHAHAHAHAHA!

I'VE BEEN REQUESTING IT FROM THE TOP BRASS FOR SOME TIME NOW, AND PART OF MY REWARD WAS THE UNIT'S ESTABLISHMENT.

I'M CURRENTLY IN COMMAND OF THE NEWLY ESTABLISHED PIRATE-HUNTING UNIT.

SO, WHY'RE YOU REALLY HERE?

THE IMPERIAL SPACE FORCE HAS TWO MAIN SECTIONS--

A PIRATE-HUNTING UNIT...?

AND THE MOBILE RESPONSE FORCE, WHICH LEADS OUR OWN INVASIONS AND PLAYS AN ACTIVE ROLE IN CONFLICTS BEYOND OUR BORDERS.

THE DEFENSIVE FLEET, WHICH IS TASKED WITH DEFENDING US FROM OTHER NATIONS AND MAINTAINING PUBLIC ORDER...

THE DEFENSIVE FLEET CONSISTS MAINLY OF TROOPS STATIONED IN VARIOUS SYSTEMS.

AND GIVEN THE VAST TERRITORY OF THE EMPIRE, THE FLEET IS OFTEN VERY SCATTERED.

THAT'S A FAIR POINT...

THIS IS FINE FOR DEFENSE PURPOSES, BUT IT'S QUITE RISKY TO REDEPLOY SOME OF THE FLEET IF A NEW TARGET SUDDENLY APPEARS.

Especially with pirates and space beasts around.

THEY'D NEED A DETAILED BATTLE PLAN, LIKE THEY HAD WITH THE ASSAULT ON THE PIRATE BASE...

IF THEY PLAY THEIR HAND WRONG AND END UP WITH MORE CASUALTIES, PEACE AND ORDER WOULDN'T LAST LONG.

AND STRAGGLERS WOULD BE THE LEAST OF THEIR PROBLEMS.

SO, BASICALLY...

AS THE CORNERSTONE OF THE EMPIRE'S MILITARY POWER, THE MOVEMENTS OF THE MOBILE FORCE ADD TO OUR ALREADY STRAINED RELATIONS WITH OTHER NATIONS.

Not to mention the high cost.

WE CAN'T BE CARELESS WITH BRINGING IN THE MOBILE RESPONSE FORCE EITHER.

CORRECT.

WE'VE BEEN MAKING UP FOR THAT GAP WITH MERCENARIES UNTIL NOW.

YOU LACK THE FORCES FOR RAIDING.

OKAY, I GET ALL OF THAT.

AND WITH THE IMPERIAL ARMY ALREADY CONSIDERING CREATING A RAIDING FLEET, THE PIRATE-HUNTING UNIT WAS BORN.

.....

I HAVE A JOB OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO CONSIDER.

YOU CAN TELL ME ALL THE STORIES YOU WANT, BUT I'M JUST GONNA SAY "GOOD LUCK" AND MOVE ON.

?

SO? WHAT DO YOU WANT FROM ME?

A JOB?

THE IMPERIAL FLEET IS WELL-ACCUSTOMED TO INTERFLEET BATTLES AND BASE ASSAULTS.

HOWEVER, AS EMBARRASSING AS IT MAY BE, THE GUERILLA TACTICS EMPLOYED BY PIRATES REMAIN ELUSIVE TO US.

AS SUCH...

IF WARSHIPS SHOW UP, COURSE THEY'RE GONNA RUN OR HIDE.

COLOR ME SHOCKED. PIRATES AREN'T COMPLETE IDIOTS, YA KNOW?

TO INSTRUCT THE IMPERIAL ARMY ON PIRATE ELIMINATION METHODS.

I WOULD LIKE TO ENLIST THE ASSISTANCE OF A PROFESSIONAL, SUCH AS YOURSELF...

OKAY, I UNDERSTAND.

THEN--!

fwsh!

.....

HII

WHY?!

HII SLAM!

AND I REFUSE.

WHY ARE YOU BEING SO STUBBORN ?!

NO THANKS.

CASE IN POINT...

YOU COULD JUST PAY THE MERCENARY GUILD FOR THAT, NO?

I WANT TO LEARN FROM *YOU!!*

WHY *WOULD* I TAKE THAT ON?

Ohnono

ono!

Hrrmm!

'CUZ YOU SEEM LIKE A PAIN IN THE ASS!

BECAUSE THE PAY CAN'T POSSIBLY BE WORTH IT, AND IT'LL TAKE UP A LOT OF MY TIME.

WHY DOES IT HAVE TO BE ME?

NOT LIKE I CAN SAY THAT, THOUGH...

YOUR CREATIVE TACTICS FAR EXCEED WHAT WE COULD CONCEIVE ON OUR OWN, *AND* YOU POSSESS THE BRAVERY TO EXECUTE THEM.

YOU WERE THE ONLY ONE TO SUGGEST A PLAN DURING OUR STRATEGY MEETING FOR THE BATTLE, TOO.

I'VE WORKED WITH MY FAIR SHARE OF MERCENARIES, BUT I'VE NEVER MET SOMEONE LIKE YOU.

ESPECIALLY THE WAY YOU USED THE CRYSTAL LIFE-FORMS!

IS THAT HER ATTEMPT AT A COMPLI-MENT?

DESPITE ITS ABSURDITY, YOU CARRIED THROUGH IN SPECTACULAR FASHION.

WITH YOUR DARING AND RUTHLESS METHODS...

YOU CAN MAKE FULL USE OF THE IMPERIAL FLEET...

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU HAD A SINGING CRYSTAL CONCEALED AWAY...

WORRY NOT...

AS I SAID, I HAVE NO INTENTIONS OF CHARGING YOU WITH A CRIME.

Besides, I lack concrete evidence.

TO OBLITERATE EVERY LAST PIRATE MONGREL!!

AND TEACH US ALL THE *VULGAR* TACTICS WE NEED...

IF YOU FIND THE PAY TO BE LACKING, I WILL PERSONALLY COMPENSATE YOU.

AFTER ALL, I AM AN IMPERIAL OFFICER AND THE DAUGHTER OF A MARQUESS.

I REALLY WANT YOU TO WORK WITH ME HERE. PLEASE.

.....

JUST SO YOU KNOW, REFUSING A NOBLE IMPERIAL OFFICER AFTER SHE'S MADE SUCH A GENEROUS OFFER...

IS JUST AS LIKELY TO CAUSE YOU PROBLEMS.

HAVING ME AS A CONNECTION WILL BENEFIT YOU IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

POKE

POKE

Hmm...

GLOOOOOW

THANK YOU SO MUCH!

FINE, BUT YOU OWE ME ONE.....

THIS CAN'T BE GOOD...

BY THE WAY, I HAVE A SPECIAL REWARD FOR YOU, PENDING COMPLETION OF THIS JOB...

I'M GLAD WE COULD REACH AN AGREEMENT.

A POSITION AS MY PERSONAL CONTRACT MERCENARY!!

THAT'S QUITE POSSIBLY THE MOST DISPLEASED REACTION I'VE EVER RECEIVED.

THAT'S NOT TRUE AT ALL!

WELL, THERE'S NO BENEFIT FOR ME THERE.

.....

I AM A LIEUTENANT COMMANDER FOR THE IMPERIAL SPACE FLEET AND DAUGHTER OF MARQUESS HOLZ!

SUCH A CONNECTION WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE OF USE TO YOU.

ADDITIONALLY, YOU'RE FAR LESS LIKELY TO BE DRAGGED INTO THE ISSUES OF NOBILITY OR THE ARMY.

.....

.....

HEY.

ARE YOU...

KIDDING ME?

I AM NOT GONNA BE USED BY YOU.

I'M DOING YOU A FAVOR WITH THIS JOB.

I'M ONLY GONNA SAY THIS ONCE.

I AM NOT. ARE YOU DISSATISFIED WITH MY OFFER?

FLINCH

YOU'RE JUST USING THAT AS A MEANS TO ENTICE ME.

HOW EXACTLY IS THAT REPAYING ME?

YES, AND I INTEND TO REPAY YOU AS MY CONTRACT--

WORST-CASE SCENARIO, WE JUST LEAVE IMPERIAL SPACE.

AND REALLY, "ISSUES OF NOBILITY OR THE ARMY"?

WHA--?!

I... YOU...

YOU GOT SOME REAL NERVE TO CALL THAT A REPAYMENT.

MEANS THAT *YOUR* ENEMIES BECOME MINE TOO.

And I bet you've got plenty of 'em.

BESIDES, BEING A CONTRACT MERCENARY FOR YOU...

GIVEN MY LESS-THAN-POLITE STYLE OF BUSINESS, THAT'S A DEALBREAKER.

NOT ONLY THAT, BUT IF I'M UNDER CONTRACT TO YOU, THAT LIMITS WHAT I CAN AND CAN'T DO.

I DON'T EVEN WANNA THINK ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU CUT ME OFF WHEN I ACTUALLY NEED YOU.

AND TO TOP IT ALL OFF, IF I CAUSE A PROBLEM OR FIND MYSELF IN DANGER, THERE'S NO GUARANTEE THAT YOU'LL HAVE MY BACK.

IN FACT, THERE ARE MORE CONS THAN PROS.

TREMBLE

TREMBLE

TREMBLE

SO, HONESTLY, BEING YOUR CONTRACT MERCENARY HAS LITTLE IN IT FOR ME.

HEH HEH HEH...

HOLD IT, NOW YOU'RE GOING TOO FAR...

Huh?

DUN!

YOU'RE EVEN MORE INTEREST-ING THAN I GAVE YOU CREDIT FOR!!

YOU'RE THE FIRST MERCENARY TO SPEAK BACK TO ME IN SUCH A MANNER!!

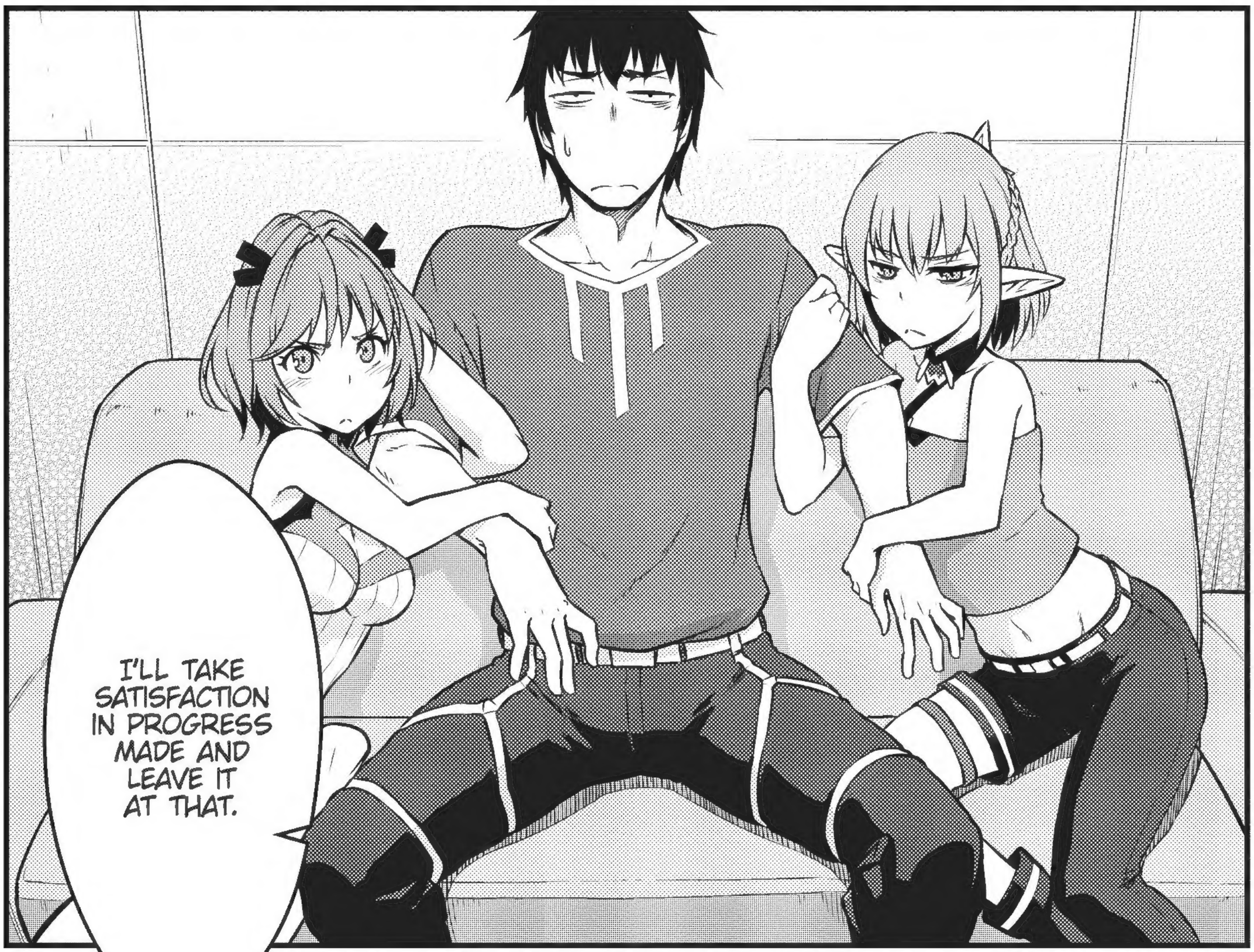
IN-DEED...

I OUGHT TO REFRAIN FROM COLLARING A CAT BEFORE IT'S ACCUSTOM-ED TO MY FEEDINGS.

WHO'RE YOU CALL-ING A STRAY?

A PET CAT HAS A CERTAIN CUTENESS TO IT...

BUT THERE'S SOMETHING TO BE SAID FOR A STRONG-WILLED STRAY, TOO.



to be continued

REBORN AS A

SPACE MERCENARY

I WOKE UP PILOTING THE **STRONGEST STARSHIP!**

SEVEN SEAS ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS

REBORN AS A SPACE MERCENARY

I WOKE UP PILOTING THE STRONGEST STARSHIP! Vol.3

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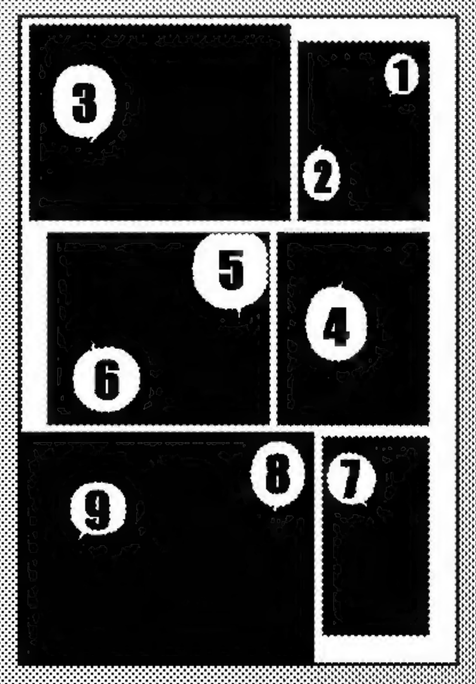
READING DIRECTIONS

This book reads from ***right to left***, Japanese style. If this is your first time reading manga, you start reading from the top right panel on each page and take it from there. If you get lost, just follow the numbered diagram here. It may seem backwards at first, but you'll get the hang of it! Have fun!!



ZG:23:HY:02:RE

The Blood of a...Hiro?

Former corporate stooge Hiro is now living his best life in another universe! From touring a cultured meat factory with his harem of cuties to meeting a sexy doctor who is very into him, it seems like nothing could possibly go wrong. But then he finds out that he's carrying a fortune in his bloodstream: human DNA from our universe is very rare in the star-spanning cosmos of *SOL!* Should Hiro sell out, or is his genetic sequence going to belong to the first person to get his, or *her*, hands on it?

OLDER TEEN (15+)

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